What is claimed is:

1 1. A machine-readable medium that stores a pricing database accessible by a

2 computer, the pricing database organized according to a data structure which

3 defines:

4   a plurality of representations of food products; and

5   a plurality of price ranges, each corresponding to a respective one of

6 the plurality of food products and each defining a maximum price and a minimum

7 price for which the corresponding food product may be sold in exchange for a

8 round-up amount associated with a purchase.

1 2. A machine-readable medium that stores a pricing database accessible by

2 computer, the pricing database organized according to a data structure which

3 defines:

4   a plurality of age categories corresponding to a food product; and

5   a plurality of price ranges, each corresponding to a respective one of

6 the plurality of age categories and defining a maximum price and a minimum price

7 for which the corresponding food product may be sold in exchange for a round-up

8 amount associated with a purchase when an age of the food product corresponds to

9 the one of the plurality of age categories.

1 3.   A method, comprising:

2   determining a time until expiration of a food product;

3   setting a price range of the food product based on the time until expiration;

4 and

5   storing an indication that the food product may be offered in exchange for a

6 round-up amount if the round-up amount is within the price range.

1 4.   The method of claim 3, wherein the price range defines a minimum price

2 and a maximum price.

1 5.   A method, comprising:

2   generating a purchase price of a purchase;

3   generating a rounded price;

4   calculating a round-up amount, the round amount being a difference

5   between the purchase price and the rounded price;

6   identifying a food product and a corresponding price range of the food

7   product, wherein the round-up amount is within the price range; and

8   offering the food product in exchange for the round-up amount.

1   6.   The method of claim 5, wherein the step of identifying a food product

2   comprises:

3   determining a first product, the first product corresponding to a first price

4   range wherein the round-up amount is within the first price range;

5   determining a second product, the second product corresponding to a

6   second price range wherein the round-up amount is within the second price range;

7   and

8   selecting one of the first and the second product to offer in exchange for the

9   round-up amount.

1   7.   The method of claim 6, wherein the step of selecting comprises:

2   selecting one of the first and the second product to offer in exchange for the

3   round-up amount in a random fashion.

1   8.   The method of claim 6, wherein the step of selecting comprises:

2   receiving at least one characteristic of the purchase; and

3   selecting one of the first and second product to offer in exchange for the

4   round-up amount based on the at least one characteristic.

1   9.   The method of clam 8, wherein the step of receiving at least one

2   characteristic of the purchase comprises:

3   receiving an indication of at least one of (i) a number of customers

4   associated with the purchase, (ii) at least one product included in the purchase, (iii)

5   an age of a customer associated with the purchase, (iv) a weight of a customer

6   associated with the purchase, and (v) a gender of a customer associated with the

7   purchase.

1   10.   A method, comprising:

2   determining a status of at least one characteristic of a food product, the at

3   least one characteristic being indicative of the age of the food product:

4   setting a price range of the food product based on the status, wherein the

5   price range defines a minimum price and a maximum price;

6   generating a purchase price of a purchase;

7   generating a rounded price;

8   calculating a round-up amount, the round amount being a difference

9   between the purchase price and the rounded price; and

10   causing the food product to be offered in exchange for the round-up amount

11   if the round-up amount is within the price range.

1   11.   The method of claim 10, wherein the at least one characteristic comprises at

2   least one of (i) a temperature of the food product, (ii) a staleness of the food

3   product, and (iii) a sogginess of the food product.

1   12.   A method, comprising:

2   determining a time until expiration of a food component;

3   causing the food component to be made into a food product if the time until

4   expiration is less than a predetermined threshold;

5   setting a minimum price for the food product based on the time until

6   expiration of the food component; and

7   causing the food product to be offered in exchange for a round-up amount,

8   wherein the round-up amount is a difference between a purchase price and a

9   rounded price of a purchase.

1   13.   A method, comprising:

2   determining a time until expiration of a food component;

3   determining a food product corresponding to the food component;

4   setting a price range for the food product, wherein the price range defines a

5 minimum price and a maximum price; and

6   causing an offer to exchange the food product for a round-up amount if the

7 round-up amount is within the price range to be output, wherein the round-up

8 amount is a difference between a purchase price and a rounded price of a purchase.

1 14.   The method of claim 13, further comprising:

2   causing the food component to be made into the food product and provided

3 in exchange for the round-up amount if the offer is accepted.

1 15.   A method, comprising:

2   determining a time until expiration of at least one food component of a food

3 product;

4   determining a time until expiration of the food product based on the time

5 until expiration of the at least one food component;

6   setting a price range for the food product, wherein the price range defines a

7 minimum price and a maximum price; and

8   causing an offer to exchange the food product for a round-up amount if the

9 round-up amount is within the price range to be output, wherein the round-up

10 amount is a difference between a purchase price and a rounded price of a purchase.

1 16.   An apparatus comprising:

2   a storage device; and

3   a processor in communication with the storage device, the storage device

4   storing a program for controlling the processor; and

5   the processor operative with the program to:

6   determine a time until expiration of a food product;

7   set a price range of the food product based on the time until

8 expiration; and

9   store an indication that the food product may be offered in exchange

10 for a round-up amount if the round-up amount is within the price range.

1   17.   An apparatus, comprising:

2   a storage device; and

3   a processor in communication with the storage device,

4   the storage device storing a program for controlling the processor; and

5   the processor operative with the program to:

6   generate a purchase price of a purchase;

7   generate a rounded price;

8   calculate a round-up amount, the round amount being a difference

9   between the purchase price and the rounded price;

10   identify a food product and a corresponding price range of the food

11   product, wherein the round-up amount is within the price range; and

12   offer the food product in exchange for the round-up amount.

1   18.   An apparatus, comprising:

2   a storage device; and

3   a processor in communication with the storage device,

4   the storage device storing a program for controlling the processor; and

5   the processor operative with the program to:

6   determine a status of at least one characteristic of a food product,

7   the at least one characteristic being indicative of the age of the food product:

8   set a price range of the food product based on the status, wherein

9   the price range defines a minimum price and a maximum price;

10   generate a purchase price of a purchase;

11   generate a rounded price;

12   calculate a round-up amount, the round amount being a difference

13   between the purchase price and the rounded price; and

14   cause the food product to be offered in exchange for the round-up

15   amount if the round-up amount is within the price range.

1   19.   An apparatus, comprising:

2   a storage device; and

3   a processor in communication with the storage device,

4   the storage device storing a program for controlling the processor; and

5   the processor operative with the program to:

6   determine a time until expiration of a food component;

7   cause the food component to be made into a food product if the time

8   until expiration is less than a predetermined threshold;

9   set a minimum price for the food product based on the time until

10 expiration of the food component; and

11   cause the food product to be offered in exchange for a round-up

12 amount, wherein the round-up amount is a difference between a purchase price and

13 a rounded price of a purchase.

1   20.   An apparatus, comprising:

2   a storage device; and

3   a processor in communication with the storage device,

4   the storage device storing a program for controlling the processor; and

5   the processor operative with the program to:

6   determine a time until expiration of a food component;

7   determine a food product corresponding to the food component;

8   set a price range for the food product, wherein the price range

9   defines a minimum price and a maximum price; and

10   cause an offer to exchange the food product for a round-up amount

11 if the round-up amount is within the price range to be output, wherein the round-up

12 amount is a difference between a purchase price and a rounded price of a purchase.

1   21.   A medium encoded with a program for implementing a method, said program

2   for directing a device to perform the steps of:

3   determining a time until expiration of a food product;

4   setting a price range of the food product based on the time until

5   expiration; and

6   storing an indication that the food product may be offered in

7   exchange for a round-up amount if the round-up amount is within the price range.

1   22.   A medium encoded with a program for implementing a method, said

2   program for directing a device to perform the steps of:

3   generating a purchase price of a purchase;

4   generating a rounded price;

5   calculating a round-up amount, the round amount being a difference

6   between the purchase price and the rounded price;

7   identifying a food product and a corresponding price range of the

8   food product, wherein the round-up amount is within the price range; and

9   offering the food product in exchange for the round-up amount.

1   23.   A medium encoded with a program for implementing a method, said

2   program for directing a device to perform the steps of:

3   determining a status of at least one characteristic of a food product,

4   the at least one characteristic being indicative of the age of the food product:

5   setting a price range of the food product based on the status,

6   wherein the price range defines a minimum price and a maximum price;

7   generating a purchase price of a purchase;

8   generating a rounded price;

9   calculating a round-up amount, the round amount being a difference

10   between the purchase price and the rounded price; and

11   causing the food product to be offered in exchange for the round-up

12   amount if the round-up amount is within the price range.

1   24.   A medium encoded with a program for implementing a method, said

2   program for directing a device to perform the steps of:

3   determining a time until expiration of a food component;

4   causing the food component to be made into a food product if the

5   time until expiration is less than a predetermined threshold;

6   setting a minimum price for the food product based on the time until

7   expiration of the food component; and

8   causing the food product to be offered in exchange for a round-up

9   amount, wherein the round-up amount is a difference between a purchase price and

10 a rounded price of a purchase.

1   25.   A medium encoded with a program for implementing a method, said

2   program for directing a device to perform the steps of:

3   determining a time until expiration of a food component;

4   determining a food product corresponding to the food component;

5   setting a price range for the food product, wherein the price range

6   defines a minimum price and a maximum price; and

7   causing an offer to exchange the food product for a round-up amount if the round-

8   up amount is within the price range to be output, wherein the round-up amount is a

9   difference between a purchase price and a rounded price of a purchase.